

# *The Serbian Propaganda in Dick Marty's Report*

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## *Abstract*

This paper is a research into the propaganda used by states as part of their policy to achieve the effects of the foreign policy. The interior propaganda is briefly mentioned in terms of interpreting the notion of propaganda because the scope of this paper aims to focus on the Serbian propaganda against Albanians: a propaganda that addresses the local opinion, but first of all the foreign one. In this context, there is a shift in time, the return of the Serbian propaganda at a time when Albanians are giving their efforts to establishing their nation-state. The paper is intended only to present the more extreme examples from both the past and the present, and not to stop the continuation of this propaganda. Its purpose is to liaise with the latest propaganda campaign intended to demonize Albanians.

**Keywords:** propaganda, political communication, media, political effect, demonization of the enemy, Dick Marty, the Government of Serbia etc.

## *Introduction*

In the recent months, the public has received various reports by international media and representatives of international organizations. The purpose of these reports is to throw light on truth, as a hypothesis which would then require evaluation and confirmation. But in the absence of evidence or confirmation, such hypotheses remains part of the propaganda, which is an important segment of the internal and international political communication.

Propaganda, as will be elaborated below, is intended to draw effects, not to deal with truth. Meanwhile, given the current time of contemporary tools and techniques of communication which have cut

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short both the timing and physical distances, the impact of the media in the world becomes increasingly interesting. This simultaneously explains the public awareness, and increases the interest of the source of propaganda for larger effects both on the public, and political circles.

### *What is propaganda?*

Propaganda is part of politics for a long time now, while studies on propaganda have started relatively late. Although used in a variety of ways since ancient times, propaganda was shaped in the Middle Ages. Originally, the word propaganda derives from an office of the Catholic church, which deals with the spread of religion (de propaganda fide). In 1622, with Pope Gregory XV's seal a missionary college for the propagation of religion in the world through publications in various languages was established: "De Propaganda fide", and this is where the word was used for the first time.<sup>1</sup> At the end of XVII century the word propaganda found a wide spread use with the strengthening of church missions on spreading religion and acquired the meaning of spreading a message, an intensive action to achieve favors and attract a large number of people to influence on the collective psyche.

In modern times, in the twentieth century, propaganda becomes a tool for achieving, maintaining or benefiting from power. This century is characterized by three developments of great political importance: the growth of democracy, economic growth and the increasing power of propaganda to protect the economic power and democracy.<sup>2</sup>

The importance of propaganda was recognized during the First World War. Thus the war propaganda was born. Among the most meticulous researchers we recall Walter Lippman and Harold

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<sup>1</sup> Emidio Diodato, *Introduzione alla comunicazione politica internazionale*, Guerra Edizioni, 2003, Perugia, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Alex Carey, *Taking the Risk out of Democracy: Corporate Propaganda versus Freedom and Liberty*, University of Illinois Press, 1997, p.19.

Lasswell.<sup>3</sup> "Public opinion" of 1922 is attributed to the former, a publication which has since then become the main book of the American journalism of this social field. Lippman develops a theory on the creation of public opinion based on the power of media and misinformation. In 1927 Lasswell published "Propaganda Technique in the World War" which highlights that during World War I propaganda was quite effective. Being a fan of state management of public opinion through the power of propaganda, Lasswell focuses on the study of media at the international level, with his slogan: international communication-propaganda-belief.

Another important researcher of Propaganda, Jacques Ellul (1965), explains that propaganda tries to surround man from all possible ways, feelings and ideas, playing with the will for his needs. *First of all, propaganda is based on psychological and sociological scientific analysis of.*<sup>4</sup> Ellul explains that the purpose of propaganda is to issue effects rather than say anything. It affects the public and private sphere of human rights, undertakes to explain the world (in its own way) and requires-offers immediate incentives for action.

Propaganda started to be commonly used in the second quarter of the XX century to describe the efforts of totalitarian regimes to place information entirely under state policy.

By the end of the 1930's when it was becoming more and more known that war would be inevitable Britain established its own Ministry, not one of Propaganda, but one of Information, two different words expressing the same notion in this case. This ministry widely utilized the press, the radio, cinematography and the spoken word to throw more light upon the state policy and British military action (white propaganda) and by staining at the same time what the Axis powers were doing (black propaganda).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Umberto Gori etc, *Comunicazione e politica internazionale*, Rubbettino Editore, Roma, 2004, p. 70-71.

<sup>4</sup> Jacques Ellul, *Propaganda: The Formation of Men's Attitudes*, Vintage Books Edition, Random House Inc, News York, 1973, p. 4 , p. xvii.

<sup>5</sup> Ian McLean, *Fjalor Politik*, Oxford, Shtëpia e Librit dhe Komunikimit, Tiranë, 2001, p. 469.

Meanwhile, in America, the Institute for Propaganda Analysis (1937) was an organization comprising of social scientists, opinion leaders, historians, educators and journalists, created for "increasing propaganda and reducing the public's ability to develop critical ideal". Its purpose was thought to be, "teaching people how to think rather than what to think."<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, we will not deal with the Nazi propaganda as we already know what it stood for.

During World War II propaganda was increasingly called *psychological warfare*. Beginning at first with the efforts of the Fascists, Nazis and Bolsheviks to ensure legitimacy and control of society and to defeat the broad base of cultural hegemony of the previous regimes, propaganda began to address the peoples of other countries by provoking reactions of industrial democracies.

Meanwhile, today in developed democracies, as Chomsky explains, people can be controlled more effectively by controlling their thoughts.<sup>7</sup> Mass media, he says, serve as system for communicating messages and symbols to the general population.

Chomsky says that the state would have preferred to control our minds, for its purposes in implementing the policy. "But in democratic societies cannot act in that way because the state cannot control our behavior by using force. Maybe to a certain limit, but violent control options are limited. Therefore seeks to control our thoughts".<sup>8</sup>

If we use the words of the renowned philosopher Habermas, in our media societies the public opinion serves to those who seek to be important as a space to present themselves. *Exposure, fame and presentation of selves are the goal of public appearance*.<sup>9</sup>

In modern times, media exploitation has reached the height of the effectiveness of propaganda and it has almost become part of domestic and foreign policy and part of international relations. So, a propaganda that addresses domestic opinion for maintaining or

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.propagandacritic.com/articles/ct.wg.name.html> (accessed: 16.01. 2011)

<sup>7</sup> Noam Chomsky, *Propaganda i javno mishljenje*, V.B.Z., 2002, Zagreb, p. 5

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup> Jyrgen Habermas, *Midis natyralizimit dhe religjionit*, Asdreni 2008, Shkup, p 15.

gaining power, and a propaganda that has its focus on foreign opinion and diplomatic circles about the general state interests.

Propaganda itself has no weight unless it is distributed, more so when it becomes part of foreign policy. When it is distributed it takes its own form and creates effects. It is understood that a greater dissemination of the press and media somehow becomes the main broadcasting of propaganda. This way, media spread propaganda, no matter who creates it. Media may become the spreader of selfmade propaganda when it designs, formulates and spreads this propaganda itself. On the other hand, when media simply spread propaganda created by someone else, it is only an intermediary. This implies that the state, the government, powerful interest groups are its creators, using the media only as a mediator to influence the public, the domestic and the foreign opinions, and foreign countries, too.

In 1953 in the pages of the magazine "Public Opinion Quarterly" of Princeton University, Lowenthal announced the birth of a new discipline: the international political communication. The development of this new sector, according to one of the founders of the magazine, Lazarsfeld, consists of an important tool to run the "psychological war" to take place between the U.S. and the Soviet Union shortly after World War II in which propaganda was the weapon, the battlefield was the channel of international communication, while the price was the appropriation of mind and confidence of women and men worldwide.<sup>10</sup>

### *Demonization of the enemy*

Just as in domestic policy, political communication in the foreign policy has two main substantive elements: praise and reproach. Praise for themselves and reproach to the political opponent or enemy in a foreign policy. Therefore, the reproach of the enemy amounts even up to announcing him and his actions as the devil's work. In

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<sup>10</sup> Patrizia Laurano, *Fondamenti di comunicazione politica internazionale*, Bonanno Editore, Roma 2006, p. 11.

international relations, this is known as the demonization of the enemy.

One of the eminent scholars of international relations, Hans Morgenthau<sup>11</sup>, considers demonization as part of the foreign policy of states. Within the six main principles of real policy Morgenthau, in the second principle, cites demonization as one of the principles of politics and relations between states. Managing to announce the enemy as a member of devil's ideology, evil actions, countries also aim to convince neutral or third countries about another country. Therefore, "*by eliminating once and for all certain groups of people or individuals the problems represented by them are believed to be eliminated*".<sup>12</sup>

By these means, bad propaganda against the opposing party intends to convince the various factors that indeed such an idea is bad policy, and is the devil's product.

As Hans J. Morgenthau and George Kennan have argued in the context of Cold War politics that this policy seems particularly difficult for democracies, because these are political regimes that tend to demonize their enemies and, in doing so, make it difficult to find a diplomatic solution in relations between states.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Serbian propaganda against Albanians at important historical moments***

Albanians have historically been the target of constant propaganda that aimed to expand Serbian interests into Albanian territories. This even happened since the times of Albanian efforts to build a nation-state, and continues at great waves. This propaganda is developed not only through the media, but through a wide range of communication

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<sup>11</sup> Carlo Simon Belli, *Teorie delle relazioni internazionali*, Guerra Edizioni Gurru, Perugia, 2003, p. 94.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem

<sup>13</sup> George F. Kennan, *American Diplomacy*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 59.; Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), p. 387.

tools, publications, books, magazines, etc., and even alleged scientific studies.

Propaganda against Albanians started early, since the times of the Congress of Berlin, and continued in the following periods of time, much more aggressively and abundantly. The book of Vladan Djordjevic, a former prime minister of Serbia, published during the proceedings of the Conference of Ambassadors (1913), *Arnauti i Velike Sile* (Belgrade, 1913), *Les Albanais et le Grand Puissances*, Paris, 1913 (translated also in German), intended to influence on the general public and official circles of the Powers of that time. It can be qualified as a synthesis of the various anti-Albanian thesis.<sup>14</sup> There, containing gross distortions and arbitrary interpretations of the facts, the lowest passions and denigrating, overtly racist prejudices are woven together. To judge the 'value' of this book, it suffices to note the notorious claim that the process of biological evolution among Albanian human species has not progressed and among them there are still (i.e. at the time of writing the book, century. XX) some possessing a tail, "some with goat tails, others with small tails, who have their permanent residence on top of trees".<sup>15</sup> But Djordjevic's pamphlet book is just one of the first books that opened the flood of anti-Albanian publications that have been published either in Serbian or in some other major languages on the eve or during the consideration of the Albanian question by the Ambassadors' Conference. At the time of proclamation of independence by the Albanian state (1912) there were other publications the purpose of which was to propagate anti-Albanian propaganda and influence the western chancellaries, and the wider Western public.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Arben Puto, *Historia e diplomatike e çështjes shqiptare*, Akademia e Shkencave, Albin, Tiranë, 2003, p.144 - 145.

<sup>15</sup> Cited by: Puto, op. cit, p. 144.

<sup>16</sup> Balkanicus (nickname of Stojan Protic) *Le problemes albanais, la Serbi e la Austro-Hungerie*, Paris 1913; J. Tomitch, *Les albanais en Vieille Serbie et fans le Sandjak de Novi Pazar*, Paris 1913; J. Cvijic, *Balkanski rat i Srbija*, Beograd 1912; J. Hadzi - Vasiljevic, *Juzna Stara Srbija*, kniga 2, Beograd 1912 etj. Op. cit. Puto, p.144 - 145.

Researchers Philip J. Cohen and David Riesman in *Serbia's Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History*, said that the memorandum of Cubrilovic (1937), "Iseljavanja arnauta" (Deportation of Albanians), resembles the propaganda and actions of Hitler and Stalin, while the author Cubrilovic, a senior adviser of the Serbian government, has been a conspirator of the assassination of Prince Franz Ferdinand, whose murder triggered the commencement of the First World War.<sup>17</sup>

"The only effective way is to eliminate the Albanians from their triangle, Debar-Nish-Rogozhinë, *en masse*. To cause mass migration, one must first provoked a mass psychosis, which can be achieved in many ways ... "<sup>18</sup> wrote Cubrilovic.

Afterwards, there are a number of publications, articles, memos, which aimed to demonize Albanians.

This propaganda campaign certainly had its consequences for all Albanians. In this sense, Serbia demanded that eliminating a slightly wider group of people, would eliminate the problem of Kosovo. Therefore, a powerful propaganda that went on for decades has had another purpose: to demonize the Albanian demand for national unity including the independence of Kosovo. After a while, this propaganda that presented the unification of Albanians in a state, as a common evil for the region, begun to have its effect and its propagandist success. The reference to "unity" immediately associates with the demonized denomination of "Greater Albania" - Ethnic Albania.

To achieve larger effects, Serbian propaganda that was put at the service of the state, often went beyond the limits of normal human logic, as the above mentioned example of their claim over biological evolution. Such propaganda was followed against Albanian communities in the Serbian expansionist war. The researcher of Serbian novice military propaganda, Renaud de la Brosse in *Political*

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<sup>17</sup> Philip J. Cohen & David Riesman, *Serbia's Secret War: Propaganda and the Deceit of History*, Texas A&M University Press, 1999, p. 688.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.



*Propaganda and the Plan to Create 'A State For All Serbs'*<sup>19</sup> investigated cases how Serbian propaganda has promoted traditional and historical hatred of public opinion using racist, xenophobic, chauvinistic, etc. Brosse takes Serbian propaganda as an example and compares it to the Nazi propaganda. At a time when Sarajevo was cut off from the rest of the world (1992) by the Serbian siege of Sarajevo, Serbian state television (RTS) broadcasted a report SRNA and provides the most bizarre example of propaganda: *"In the zoo, Muslims throw Serbain women and childern as food to the lions."*<sup>20 21</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Propaganda makers often find agents who supply information and misinformation in such a way that delivery of propaganda as "independent source" is more reliable for a particular focus group. In this context, various articles about Kosovo in some Western newspapers, but also the Swiss parliamentary report already approved in the General Assembly of the Council of Europe, Dick Marty<sup>22</sup>, have numerous of unquoted references by two books so

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<sup>19</sup> Renaud de la Brosse, *Political Propaganda and the Plan to Create 'A State For All Serbs*. Five reports of his current research on Serbian propaganda found in: [http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de\\_la\\_brosse\\_pt1.pdf](http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de_la_brosse_pt1.pdf), [http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de\\_la\\_brosse\\_pt2.pdf](http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de_la_brosse_pt2.pdf), [http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de\\_la\\_brosse\\_pt3.pdf](http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de_la_brosse_pt3.pdf), [http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de\\_la\\_brosse\\_pt4.pdf](http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de_la_brosse_pt4.pdf), [http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de\\_la\\_brosse\\_pt5.pdf](http://hague.bard.edu/reports/de_la_brosse_pt5.pdf) (accessed: 27.01.2011) ; see also: Renaud de La Brosse, *Les medies de la haine*, La Decouverte, Paris 1998.

<sup>20</sup> Video of the RTS: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?gl=GB&hl=en-GB&v=LzUqQxNb8qw&e> (accessed: 18.01.2011).

<sup>21</sup> Renaud de La Brosse, *Les medies de la haine*, La Decouverte, Paris 1998, f. 4. One of the five parts of this study, found in: <http://archiv2.medienhilfe.ch/topics/delabrosse/RSFHaine.pdf> (accessed: 22.12. 2010).

<sup>22</sup> The full report is found in: <http://www.assembly.coe.int/CommitteeDocs/2010/ajdoc462010prov.pdf> (accessed: 18.01. 2011).

called "white" drafted by the Serbian intelligence agency, BIA, published in 2003 by the Government of Serbia. These books promoted by the Serbian Parliament<sup>23</sup>, even these days can be found on the official website of the government of this country<sup>24</sup>.

Propaganda, whether positive or negative, is not always straightforward, not only in terms of its content but also from its source of distribution. What remains unchanged is the goal, which is to achieve a greater impact for various benefits, mainly political.

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<sup>23</sup> Albanski terorizam i organizovani kriminal na Kosovu i Metohiji, <http://www.srpskadijaspora.info/vest.asp?id=4093> , 8.12.203. (accessed: 16.01. 2011).

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